

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed April 9, 2008.

Claims 1-9 and 11-16 were pending in the present application. This Amendment cancels claims 1-9 and 11-16 without prejudice, and adds new claims 20-40. Support for the new claims can be found in the Specification as filed, and no new matter has been added.

Warning of Duplicate Claims

The Examiner advises that “should claims 1, 7, and 13 be found allowable, claims 14-16 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof.” (Office Action: pg. 4).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion that claims 14-16 are “substantial duplicates” of claims 1, 7, and 13. However, for reasons unrelated to patentability, claims 1, 7, 13, and 14-16 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the warning is moot.

35. U.S.C. §112 Rejection of Claims 1, 7, and 13-16

Claims 1, 7, and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. However, for reasons unrelated to patentability, claims 1, 7, and 13-16 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection of these claims is moot.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 1-9 and 11-16

Claims 1-19 and 11-16 are rejected under 36 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gervais et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,579, hereinafter “Gervais”) in view of Win et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,453,353, hereinafter “Win”).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. However, for reasons unrelated to patentability, claims 1-19 and 11-16 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection of these claims is moot.

New Claims 20-40

Claims 1-9 and 11-16 have been canceled in favor of new claims 20-40, in view of the extent of the revisions to the claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that support for the new claims may be found in the Specification as filed. Support for independent claims 20, 27, and 34 may be found in the Specification at, for example, pg. 3, lines 5-18, pg. 5, lines 11-13, pg. 11, lines 15-24, pg. 19, lines 12-24, and pg. 24, lines 1-20. Support for dependent claims 21-23, 28-30, and 35-37 may be found in the Specification at, for example, pg. 3, lines 5-11, and pg. 7, line 6 to pg. 8, line 6. Support for dependent claims 24-26, 31-33, and 38-40 may be found in the Specification at, for example, pg. 4, lines 2-5.

It is to be understood that this identification of Specification support is provided merely to assist the Examiner and is not intended to be an exhaustive listing of all passages supporting particular claim features, nor is it intended to be limiting of the scope of the claims.

In the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants further submit that claims 20-40 are patentable over the cited art, namely Gervais and Win.

Independent claim 20 is directed to a system for sharing information among a plurality of business entities involved in a product supply chain. Merely by way of example, one business entity may be a computer manufacturer A, and another business entity may be a keyboard manufacturer B contracted to supply keyboards to computer manufacturer A. The system includes a storage component configured to store “a plurality of data objects, each data object including a plurality of predefined data groups.” The system further includes a processing component configured to control access to the data objects. The data objects may, for example, represent information regarding the computers manufactured by computer manufacturer A.

In an embodiment, the processing component is configured to “receive, from a user affiliated with a first business entity in the plurality of business entities, a request to access a data object in the plurality of data objects, wherein the data object is owned by a second business entity in the plurality of business entities,” and “extract from the request a user identifier that uniquely identifies the user.” The processing component is further configured to “retrieve a set

of privileges associated with the data object and the user identifier, the set of privileges including read privileges identifying one or more predefined data groups of the data object that the user is allowed to view,” and “determine, based on the read privileges, one or more predefined data groups of the data object that the user is not allowed to view.” Finally, the processing component is configured to “generate a redacted version of the data object, wherein the redacted version of the data object does not include the one or more predefined data groups of the data object that the user is not allowed to view,” and “transmit the redacted version of the data object to the user.”

In various embodiments, the set of privileges are “defined by the second business entity based on one or more business agreements between the second business entity and one or more third business entities in the plurality of business entities for handling confidential information in the product supply chain.” Thus, returning to the example above, computer manufacturer A (e.g., second business entity) may have a business agreement with a keyboard manufacturer C (e.g., third business entity) to keep all specifications pertaining to keyboard manufacturer C’s keyboard product confidential from keyboard manufacturer B. Accordingly, computer manufacturer A may grant keyboard manufacturer B read privileges to information pertaining to general keyboard specifications. but prevent keyboard manufacturer B from viewing detailed data about keyboard manufacturer C’s keyboard product. In this manner, information may be shared among multiple entities in a supply chain while maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information.

Neither Gervais nor Win nor any combination thereof teaches the system recited in independent claim 20. Gervais is directed to a business-to-business portal that organizes access to extended business applications. (Gervais: Abstract). Applicants could not find (and the Office Action does not identify) any disclosure in Gervais that teaches or suggests, for example, “wherein the set of privileges are defined by the second business entity based on one or more business agreements between the second business entity and one or more third business entities in the plurality of business entities for handling confidential information in the product supply chain” as recited in claim 20.

Win is directed to an access server configured to control user access to information resources based on a user's role. (Win: Abstract). As described in Win, a "role" reflects "a relationship of a user to the organization, e.g., employee, customer, distributor, supplier, ... Roles determine what resources a user can access." (Win: col. 5, lines 21-44). Thus, at best, Win merely teaches the concept of controlling user access based on a relationship (*i.e.*, role) between two parties (the user and the information provider). Win makes absolutely no reference to a system for controlling user access for a user of a first entity based on a relationship between a second entity and a third entity, let alone the specific system recited in claim 20. Accordingly, Win also fails to teach or suggest "wherein the set of privileges are defined by the second business entity based on one or more business agreements between the second business entity and one or more third business entities in the plurality of business entities for handling confidential information in the product supply chain" as recited in claim 20.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 20 is allowable over Gervais and/or Win.

Independent claims 27 and 34 recite features that are substantially similar to independent claim 20, and are thus believed to be allowable over Gervais and Win for at least a similar rationale as discussed for claim 20, and others.

Dependent claims 21-26, 28-33, and 35-40 depend (either directly or indirectly) from independent claims 20, 27, and 34 respectively, and are thus believed to be allowable over Gervais and Win for at least a similar rationale as discussed for claims 20, 27, and 34, and others.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 09/401,251
Amdt. dated July 9, 2008
Reply to Office Action of April 9, 2008

PATENT

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

/Andrew J. Lee/

Andrew J. Lee
Reg. No. 60,371

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 650-326-2400
Fax: 415-576-0300
AJL:tmm:mg
61348002 v1